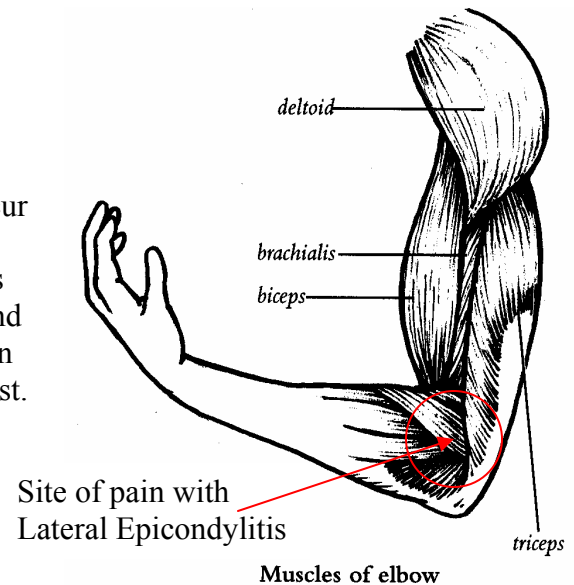


LATERAL EPICONDYLITIS (Tennis Elbow)

◆ What is it?

Lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow) is the most common painful condition of the elbow. Inflammation and pain occur on the outer side of the elbow where muscles and tendons attach to the bone. The structures involved are the muscles or tendons of the forearm that bring your wrist back (extend the wrist). This occurs not only in tennis players but also in anyone who performs repeated resisted motions of the wrist. Without proper intervention, this may develop into a chronic, recurrent problem.



◆ Signs and Symptoms of this Condition

- Pain and tenderness on the outer side of the elbow.
- Pain or weakness with gripping activities.
- Pain with twisting motions of the wrist (playing tennis, using a screwdriver, opening a door or a jar).
- Pain with lifting objects (carton of milk out of the refrigerator or any object of weight).

◆ Causes

- Chronic repetitive stress and strain of the muscles and tendons that attach the forearm muscles to the elbow (gripping, writing, typing, racquet sports, etc.)
- Sudden increase in activity level or intensity.
- Incorrect grip.
- Incorrect grip size of racquet (often too large).
- Incorrect hitting position or technique (usually backhand; leading with the elbow) in racquet sports.
- Using a racquet that is too heavy.

◆ What Can I do to Prevent Lateral Epicondylitis?

- Appropriately warm up and stretch before practice or competition.
- Maintain appropriate conditioning:
 - Wrist and forearm flexibility
 - Muscle strength and endurance
 - Cardiovascular fitness
- Ensure proper equipment fit.

- Maintain proper technique and have a coach correct improper technique.
- Wear a tennis elbow (counterforce) brace.

◆ Prognosis

- This depends upon how long it has been going on
 - Acute cases identified and treated appropriately (described below) can resolve in 6-8 weeks.
 - Chronic cases that have been allowed to continue for months or years in an attempt to “work through” the pain can take many months (6-8 months or more) to resolve and may require more invasive measures to resolve the symptoms such as steroid injection or surgery.

◆ Treatment

- Rest – avoid the repetitive motions/activities that caused the condition.
- Ice massage over the painful outer elbow 10 minutes 1-2 times per day. (Ice massage is performed by filling paper or foam cups with water and freezing them. Take the frozen cup and tear off the outer edge of the cup near the lip to expose the ice. Hold the cup with one hand and place the ice portion so that it is in contact with the injured/painful area and rub in circles over the painful area). **See Below**
- Anti-inflammatory medication (aspirin, ibuprofen, etc) may be helpful in reducing both pain and inflammation.
- Stretching exercises. **See Below**
- Wear a tennis elbow brace (counterforce brace).
- Cases that do not resolve with these measures may require a steroid injection, and some chronic, unresolving cases may even require surgery to release the tendons at the attachment to the elbow.

